

PERSPECTIVE



Central Valley Education Association

March 2011

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Social Security tax decreases--- think about investing the difference in a DCP

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Did you know that the employee portion of the Social Security tax will decrease from 6.2% of your income to 4.2% for all of 2011? Instead of just absorbing this slight increase in take-home pay this year, you might want to think about investing it in the state's Deferred Compensation Program (DCP). DCP is an alternative investment plan that's administered by the State of Washington, and is available to all employees of the school district.

DCP allows you to set aside pre-tax contributions each month, similar to a 403(b) plan. Because DCP is managed by the state, however, it does not have the typical charges that employees might encounter with private investment firms.

Depending on your tax bracket, it may be possible for you to contribute to a DCP plan without substantially reducing your take-home pay; in some cases, your take-home pay may actually increase. That's because your contribution reduces the income on which your income tax is calculated, so your reduction in income tax may substantially offset the cost of your DCP contribution. Investments in DCP grow tax-free until you withdraw them, presumably at retirement when you're in a lower income tax bracket.

Here are some features of the DCP:

- Deductions are made directly from your monthly paycheck.
- You can change your contribution amount at any time.
- The plan has low administrative fees (0.14% annually).
- No federal income taxes are withheld from your contributions.
- You can access your account easily online.
- Distributions are available without penalty at any age when you separate from employment.
- The plan has a low minimum monthly contribution of \$30.
- For those under age 50, you can contrib-

ute up to \$16,500 per [calendar] year. For those over 50, the maximum is \$22,000 for the [calendar] year.

- There's a broad range of investment options available to you, and you can change your investment selection at any time.
- There is a variety of payment options once you separate from employment or retire.
- In the event of your death, your beneficiary will receive payment of your funds.

Use this url [<https://washington.gwrs.com/login.do>] to get more information about the State of Washington Deferred Compensation Program, or call 1-888-327-5596.



Retirement Seminar

Even if retirement is not on your agenda for a few years, you might want to begin getting ready for it. Conventional wisdom says that you should begin learning what you need to do at least five years before you plan to retire. I have attended seminars put on by the state Retirement System, a local retired teachers group and the WEA-Retired group. Each had it's own highlights, and I learned much from each one. You will find that it is best to get the retirement packet and begin completing forms and gathering documents a year in advance of your intended retirement date. The district also provides much in the way of advice and assistance.

The WEA-Retired group will be doing a seminar for Eastern Washington members on April 15 and 16 (Friday night and Saturday.) To register contact Kathy Garger by email at "kgarger@washingtonea.org" or call her at 509-326-4046.

ELECTION RESULTS

Elections for the Executive Board of the Central Valley Education Association were held last month. A special thanks to all who chose to throw their hats in the ring to represent fellow members. It is a big commitment and their willingness to serve is appreciated. CVEA Officers for the 2011-2012 school year are as follows:

Vice President - Scott Knowles, Opportunity Elementary

Secretary - Mariann Torretta, University Elementary

Elementary Representative - Keith Hoekema, Broadway

Middle School Representative - Monica Larson, Evergreen

High School Representative - Victoria Jensen, University High

Special Services Representative - Heather Graham, Nurse

Thank you for
voting!



The Status of the Washington Public School Teacher

In the Spring of 2007, a random sample of Washington classroom teachers was asked a variety of questions regarding working conditions, education and experience.

	Average
• Total time spent each week after the required work day on noncompensated school-related activities	11.2 hrs
• Amount of your own money spent to meet the needs of your students	\$469
• Number of college quarter hour credits earned in the past three years (since college graduation)	9.0 credits

TPEP

(Teacher and Principal Evaluation Pilot)

It was about this time last year that I heard the first information about an upcoming Teacher and Principal Evaluation Pilot. Senate Bill 6696 required the development of a new evaluation system for teachers and principals. We were in contract negotiations at the time and we agreed to pursue a grant to participate in the pilot. Our thinking was since we have to go to a new instrument anyway we might as well be part of the process of deciding what that instrument looks like. The district went through the application process and was chosen as one of the eight districts and one consortium to develop and implement the pilot.

A core group of two teachers, two principals, the CVEA president, and the Assistant Superintendent for Learning and Teaching, spent several days in mid-August at the initial meetings held in Federal Way. In September a large group was assembled including at least one teacher from every building, building administrators, three parents and district administrators. Over the course of the last several months meetings have been held, usually taking the whole day, wherein the group decided on organizational structure, group norms, a schedule and began the arduous task of developing

two evaluation instruments; one for teachers and one for principals.

I have been amazed at the richness of the discussion and the depth of thought given to this task. The debate was respectful but very intense at times. One thing was clear, we all wanted to produce instruments that would allow for professional growth and support student learning in the Central Valley school district.

We are now at the end of the initial phase of this project as of the writing of this article. The next phase, which we have begun by the time you read this, is a mini-pilot to be run this spring to test the instruments. Approximately 60 teachers and all Principals, Assistant Principals and Principal Assistants will be part of the mini-pilot. Those engaged in this mini-pilot will allow us to gather the kind of data necessary to check the validity of our evaluation instruments. After this mini-pilot is completed and the data is analyzed, we will revisit the instruments for fine tuning in preparation for the major pilot which will run next year. In both pilots the teachers and principals in the pilot will still be officially evaluated using the old instruments.

Some elements of the new instruments are mandated by the 6696 legislation. For example, that legislation requires that the new in-

struments have four levels or tiers, a grand departure from our current two-tier system. It also mandates that whatever comes out of this pilot replaces the existing evaluation instruments in the 2013-2014 school year. For most of us change can be a scary process, and much of this pilot involves second-order change, so being apprehensive about this move is normal. We are hoping, however, that the educators that make up this district will rise to this task with the excellence that is characteristic of Central Valley. We will need your constructive input as we move forward with this process. *Steve*

CALENDAR

- March 16, Budget Analysis training, WEA-EW
- March 18 & 19, Poli-SPARKS
- CVEA Exec. Bd., March 29, 4:00, CVEA office
- April 4-8, SPRING BREAK
- SEAT, APRIL 12, 3:45, LTC
- WEA-EW Rep Council, April 13, 5:30, WEA-EW bldg
- CVEA Bldg Rep mtng., April 19, 4:00, Cuppa Joe's

CVEA Executive Board

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